

Sketch

Volume 38, Number 3

1973

Article 3

Triple Zero Six

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Triple Zero Six

Anonymous

Time check . . . triple zero one. Wow, we go at triple zero six . . . got five more minutes before big number fifty-eight. Man, it doesn't seem like a whole year now that I can look back on the months. Yep, I guess I've kept a close eye on time. Man, I can remember that first one just like it only happened a couple of days ago. Well, big fellow, that was fifty-seven ago and damn near a whole god damn year. I think this is the worst time of all, just sitting here waiting for something to break, just like the first time. Let me see now, was that the time we lost a number two generator on the take-off roll? No . . . no, now that I think about it, that was the time we got a fire light on number seven and we had to shut down at the end of the runway while the electricians fixed a shorted wire. I wonder how they know just where to look for something like that. Shit, they always call an electrician and they damn near beat us to the end of the runway, find out what's wrong, and fix it before we can get this damn thing turned around. Yes, it is kinda strange, I wonder what the electricians would do if they found a real live fire burning out there. Well, that's their problem—I have enough shit to worry about. In another hour and a half, Charley will be trying to jam one of those missiles up our butt. However, it's my job to see that it doesn't happen that way . . . at least not this time.

Time check . . . triple zero three, three more minutes. Man, it sure is hot. I wonder why the pilot never turns on the air conditioner until we are air borne for five minutes or so? Shit, doesn't he know it's hot right now?

Here we go, moving to our spot in line. Let's see, we are number two in line scheduled to go at triple zero six.

Oh, oh, . . . tower's trying to reach us, let's see what this asshole has got to say today. No, wait a minute, let me guess . . . it should go something like this . . . Ground control to one baker five two, tail number five one seven . . . clear run way three six, number two in line, minimum interval take-off, climb south to thirty six thousand, come back on heading one five five niner, can I get a read back five one seven . . . here he goes . . . "Ground control to one baker five two, tail number five one seven, clear runway three six, number two in line, minimum interval take-off . . ." Yeah, I knew that ass hole wouldn't change a damn thing. Man, he's always so cool and confident, never makes a mistake . . . I bet if he had a couple of heat seeking missiles jammed up his rear, he'd screw up a little every once in a while.

Time check . . . triple zero six, here we go. Now that I think about it, this is the worst time of all. So many things could go wrong . . . well, seems like we are getting a good water burn on all eight engines, let's see . . . twenty five . . . twenty six . . . twenty seven . . . twenty eight . . . twenty nine . . . we are off the ground . . . thirty one . . . thirty two . . . thirty-three . . . the gear is rotating and we are air borne. Now, Mr. Big Mouth upstairs that's flying this pig will say, we have a good water burn, gear are up and locked . . . we are air borne and will assume position as dog pack leader. I wonder why he thinks we are so dumb that we don't know that we are air borne . . . shit, if we weren't air borne we would all be dead . . . Old Big Mouth wouldn't be able to say too much then. There he goes with his little spiel. Yep, just like I thought, verbatim. Pilots must take lessons from the ass holes up in the tower.

Well, time to go to work . . . signal generator on . . . check . . . radar on . . . check . . . audible voice signal . . . check . . . fire switches in ready position . . . check, mode selector to normal . . . check . . . well, everything checks. I guess it's time for me to piss the rest of the crew off . . . hummm, I wonder why I always say the same damn thing. Oh well, here goes nothing . . . This is E.C.M. to pilot, do you copy . . . **"Roger copy, E.C.M., go ahead with your transmission . . ."** Roger this is ECM all systems go .

. . . will maintain radio silence as instructed . . . Any report from this station will indicate that an emergency does exist, I repeat, any report from this station will indicate that an emergency does exist, and that we will begin evasive action immediately . . . this is ECM over . . . **"Roger copy, ECM, be advised we have reports that there is strong enemy concentration in the drop zone area . . . be on the alert, I repeat, be on the alert for possible surface to air missiles and MIG action. This is the Air Craft Commander, over."** "Roger copy sir this is ECM out . . ."

. . . Damn it, I knew it. My last sortie in the war zone, and we will probably get the shit shot out of us. What luck, twenty-two more hours and I would have been on board a freedom bird headed for home. Man, I would be all done with the war and the Air Force.

Maybe I had better have a few words with the head man upstairs . . . after all, I am supposed to go home tomorrow . . . Let me see now, I don't recall running across the right procedure in any of the Air Force manuals. You'd think they would have some kind of regulation covering this situation. After all, I go home tomorrow, and there have been quite a few other guys in this situation before. Man, they should have something to cover this. They tell you how to clean a latrine, fire a gun, drop a bomb, fly a plane, but nothing in the book covers this.

Wait a minute . . . I've got another book. Yes, yes, here it is. Let's see now, I think it's just about in the middle . . . Hmmm . . . Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job . . . here it is, the book of Psalms.